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Mr. Rostow has asked us to reexamine the paper on the assumption that NVN is not free to move across the DMZ. He says we have assumed the opposite in the paper. (Presumably Paragraph 18)

This request presents difficulties. We have not assumed that there would be no restraints on the enemy. Rather we have estimated that he would accept no restraint. This is explicitly stated in the first paragraph of the Summary, in which we say that he would not enter talks if the US were to insist on a reciprocal gesture of de-escalation. To assume that Hanoi would voluntarily make such a gesture after we stopped bombing would be unrealistic. At some point if the talks were going well, perhaps yes, but not when they thought we were beginning to crack.

If what Mr. Rostow means is that we assume a situation in which NVN feels compelled to make such a gesture in order to get the bombing stopped and talks started because it is hurting badly North and South, this can be done as an academic exercise. Our conclusions would be quite different, because the psychological context would be reversed, but they would not be relevant to the game as we now see it.

11 October 1967

DDI-3313-67

The Honorable Walt W. Rostow
Special Assistant to the President
The White House

Dear Walt:

Herewith is a revised paragraph 18 of the memorandum you and I discussed over the phone.

The original version rested on the judgment made earlier in the paper that Hanoi would not be forthcoming with reciprocal gestures, and therefore would not refrain from firing south across the DMZ. You were right, however, in suggesting that we look at the other side of the coin if this judgment is in error. The attached paragraph does this. I do not believe that any other portions of the paper are affected by this change.

Yours,

/s/ R. J. Smith

R. J. Smith
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachment

ODDI:RJS:fk

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